

Award for the Sports Event for Peace of the Year:

CISM & FIFA FUTSAL CUP

Organizer: International Military Sports Council (CISM)



For the first time in 18 years, after the disintegration of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, **CISM brought together soldiers** of all six countries of the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia on the sports field in **their former capital - Belgrade**.

CISM (RE)WRITES HISTORY

The Yugoslav Wars were a series of violent conflicts fought in former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the 1990's and 2001. The wars ended with massive economic disruption to the Yugoslavia. After the disintegration of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, the Balkans area went through a long and terrific period of instability. Many institutions, ranging from NGOs to official UN and EU missions worked a lot in the Balkans to restore mutual understanding and to install dialogue. There are still NATO and UN Missions in the area working for Peace in the area. Where most these missions failed or only partly succeeded, CISM, in collaboration with FIFA succeeded.

CISM brought together soldiers of all six countries of the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia on the sports field **in their former capital - Belgrade**. What do 18 years stand in History, almost nothing! All six countries – **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia** – participated in the CISM & FIFA Futsal Cup, organized by the Serbian Armed Forces in Belgrade, from 13-18 April 2009, and kindly sponsored by FIFA (International Association of Football Federations).

This initiative was started only 3 years ago, when the CISM Secretary General Colonel van Meurs came up with the idea of uniting soldiers who have been facing each other **on the battle field just few years ago**. Though it took time and a lot of effort, step by step as the project evolved, every year more countries participated in these activities, till, in 2009, **CISM fully succeeded** in the **Sport for Peace initiative**. The fact that these countries accepted the

invitation issued by their former opponents reflects even further the **huge impact of the role of sport in peace-restoring efforts.**

Indeed, the CISM motto "**Friendship through sport**" became a reality in practice. The main objective of the project was achieved, as it was addressed to soldiers and not to athletes. Reality is that those soldiers were soldiers who defended their countries few years ago against aggressors, former Yugoslavian army.

As Mr. Dragan Sutanovac, Minister of Defence of Serbia said: "This CISM-FIFA Futsal Cup is an important step in history of this region and it is a great success of CISM."

CISM is very proud for the concept and organization of this event but above all we feel that the main objective of the project was achieved, as it is genuinely contributing to **strengthening multilateral relations and the stabilization of peace in this region of Europe.**